

**STATUS REPORT TO THE TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
2003 REGULAR SESSION**

**from the
Task Force on Beach and Water Safety**



**Prepared by the
Department of Land and Natural Resources
in Conjunction with the
Task Force on Beach and Water Safety**

**in response to
Act 190, Session Laws of Hawai'i 1996
as amended by
Act 101, Session Laws of Hawai'i 1999
as amended by
Act 170, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2002**

December 2002

This status report has been prepared for submittal to the Legislature pursuant to a provision in Act 190, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH) 1996, as amended by Act 101, SLH 1999 mandating annual reporting through 2003.

Act 190, SLH 1996, establishes a process for the State and Counties to provide both meaningful and legally adequate warnings to the general public of extremely dangerous natural conditions in ocean areas adjacent to their respective public beach parks. The Act recognizes a duty to warn specifically of dangerous shorebreak or strong current in the ocean fronting a beach park, if either condition exists, is extremely dangerous, is typical for that beach park, and poses a risk of serious injury or death.

Act 190, SLH 1996, clarifies that the State and Counties have no duty to warn of dangerous natural conditions at beaches, beach/coastal accesses or areas that are not public beach parks.

Act 190, SLH 1996, provides for a process, including record keeping, to replace vandalized, removed or illegible warning signs.

Act 190, SLH 1996, calls for the formation of a Task Force on Beach and Water Safety to advise the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources prior to the Chairperson making a decision on the design and placement of warning signs erected pursuant to this Act.

The Task Force on Beach and Water Safety was convened after water safety officer participants were solicited via their respective County Mayors and formally appointed by Governor Benjamin Cayetano pursuant to Act 190, SLH 1996. Other Task

Force members were seated by their government position as provided in the Act. A new Task Force member was appointed and the sitting Task Force members had their appointment continued in August 2002.

Act 101, SLH 1999, amended Act 190, SLH 1996, by extending its mandate through June 30, 2007.

The Task Force members are:

Gilbert Coloma-Agaran, (Task Force Chairperson), Chairperson, Board of Land and Natural Resources

Seiji Naya, Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Michael Mottl, Chair, Department of Oceanography, University of Hawai'i

Marian Feenstra, Chief, Aquatics Division, Department of Parks and Recreation, County of Maui

David Kalani Vierra, Ocean Safety Bureau, Kaua'i Fire Department, County of Kaua'i

Ralph Goto, Director, Ocean Safety & Lifeguard Services Division, Department of Emergency Services, City and County of Honolulu

Larry Davis, Program Administrator, Aquatics Division, Department of Parks and Recreation, County of Hawai'i

Designees are:

Daniel S. Quinn (for Gilbert Coloma-Agaran), Administrator, Division of State Parks, Department of Land and Natural Resources

Elizabeth Corbin (for Seiji Naya), Branch Chief, Ocean Resources Branch, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Richard Grigg (for Michael Mottl) Marine Biologist, Department of Oceanography, University of Hawai'i

Since late 1996, as reported previously, the Task Force has accomplished the following:

- designed signs to warn of "strong current" and "dangerous shorebreak"
- prepared guidelines for permanent sign placement
- placed "strong current" and "dangerous shorebreak" signs, where warranted, at State and County beach parks
- designed signs to warn of other extremely dangerous natural conditions in the ocean adjacent to a public beach park:

high surf
sudden drop-off
man-o-war
sharp coral
rip currents

waves break on ledge
slippery rocks
jellyfish
shark sighted

- prepared guidelines for temporary sign placement

The Task Force met on November 8, 2002. The meeting agenda and draft minutes of that meeting are attached as Appendix 1.

At the meeting of November 8, 2002, the Task Force reviewed a presentation of a Draft Comprehensive Plan for Sandy beach on O'ahu. The plan was prepared by the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division, Honolulu, Department of Emergency Services, City and County of Honolulu. A copy of the draft plan is attached as Appendix 2.

One of the basic needs for the work of the Task Force to continue is funding. Expenses involved in accomplishing the work are borne by each agency. In order to develop a meaningful comprehensive plan, funds will be required. The attached Appendix 3 outlines the funding necessary.

One of the first tasks which must be accomplished is to secure the service of an expert to develop a Beach Rating System (see page 8 of Appendix 2). This component is essential to begin formulating a relative rating of the hazards at the various beaches.

Appendix 1

Agenda

**Meeting of the Task Force on Beach and Water Safety
November 8, 2002 at 9:00 A.M.
1151 Punchbowl St, Rm. 131**

A.M.

Call to Order

Introductions

Approval of Minutes from the Task Force Meeting of October 28, 1999

Sign posting location/relocation requests

Placement schemes for additional signage

Other issues

11:00 LUNCH (On your own)

P.M.

Presentation of Draft Comprehensive Plan for Sandy Beach (Ralph Goto)

Appendix 1

MINUTES

BEACH AND WATER SAFETY TASK FORCE

MEETING OF NOVEMBER 8, 2002

Attendees: Daniel Quinn, Designee of Chair, DLNR
Richard Grigg, Designee of UH Oceanography Chair
Kalani Vierra, Kauai
Larry Davis, Hawaii
Marian Feenstra, Maui
Ralph Goto, Honolulu

The meeting was convened at 9:15 A M in the Kalanimoku Building, Honolulu. New Task Force members were introduced.

The minutes prepared for the last meeting of the Task Force, October 28, 1999, were reviewed and accepted.

Quinn reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which was adjusted to allow Task Force members to attend a press conference by the NOAA regarding wave height reporting.

Grigg suggested the Task Force discuss the issue of having a sign posted at every beach access point. There was discussion that it may be too cumbersome and unrealistic to maintain. Perhaps just the major access points is adequate.

A sign relocation approval for Laaloa (White/Disappearing Sand) Beach on Hawaii, dated April 30, 2001 was reviewed and approved after the fact. Task Force members had been sent a copy of the documentation at the time of approval by the Chairperson.

Quinn asked for Task Force input regarding Kikaua Point on Hawaii. A park is nearing completion there. The area is State land, under the jurisdiction of the Division of State Parks, but leased to, and being developed, by a private sector company, to be operated by a non-profit entity. The development company has developed a signage plan which does not include ACT 190 warning signs. Goto said that the procedure followed in the past was to have the Task Force make site visits, discuss hazards with people most familiar with local conditions, and the review signage proposal made by the entity managing each area. It was recommended that site visits be made to Kikaua Point during high surf, and submit a specific recommendation. Concerns were raised about the ocean condition "caution" sign. Concern was that the "shopping list" sign which lists a number of possible hazards, cannot be considered a warning sign.

Quinn asked for input regarding the Windward coast of Kaena Point which was recently designated as a State Park Reserve. There is approximately one mile of beachfront

Appendix 1

which has paved road access and a longer stretch of shoreline beyond the end of the paved road. Numerous possible access points from the highway to the beach make it impractical to sign each one. Goto and Quinn will make a site visit, evaluate hazards and major beach access points. Proposed signage locations will be forwarded to the Task Force.

Quinn distributed copies of ACT 170, SHL 2002 which extended ACT 190, SLH 1996, as amended by ACT 101, SLH 1999 to June 30, 2007.

Meeting recessed for NOAA press conference and lunch

Meeting reconvened at 1:00

Quinn presented Haena State Park, Kauai additional sign location request which was approved by the Task Force.

Discussion of attendance at Task Force meetings by non-Task Force Members. Consensus was that attendance 13 OK, but not participation in meeting.

Presentation of Comprehensive Plan for Sandy Beach by Ralph Goto

- See Attachment

Discussion of how to develop/fund a comprehensive plan

- Need to pursue a budget - Approximately \$90,000
 - Beach Rating System; need to hire an expert to make assessment
 - Sign evaluation System
 - Effectiveness
- Other "Hotspots" (non park areas where incidents have occurred)

Task Force considered an issue regarding the posting of a "Waves Break on Ledge" sign at Keanae Peninsula. The area is not a park, but due to a prior incident there, consensus was posting a warning sign is a good idea.

Discussion of "Hotspots" - Task Force Recommendations:

Where there are locations where incidents of serious injury and/or death have occurred, consideration should be given to posting appropriate warning signs.

Discussion of proposed additional sign posting for Kauai State Parks

- The proposed posting appears to be overkill; excessive number of signs

Appendix 1

- Try to filter out overlap and some of the less significant/potentially serious hazards - stick with "extremely hazardous" conditions
- Come back to Task Force with revised plan

Next Meeting - Plan for February - Tentatively on Maui

R. Grigg - would like to make a presentation regarding wave height reporting at next meeting.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
SANDY BEACH
2002**

**Ralph S. Goto
Administrator
Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
Honolulu Emergency Services Department
City and County of Honolulu**

Injury Prevention Strategies

- 1) Identify Nature and Scope of Problem**
- 2) Collect and Analyze Data**
- 3) Design Education and Intervention Strategies
(See Recommendations)**
- 4) Implement Strategies**
- 5) Measure and Evaluate**

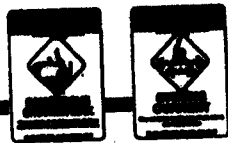
**Comprehensive Plan for Sandy Beach
October 28, 1999
"Recommendations"**

1. **Signage describing natural conditions above should be designed and posted**
2. **Education and Prevention Strategies**
 - a. **Direct contact by lifeguards**
 - b. **Public address announcements by lifeguard**
 - c. **Information about daily conditions posted at lifeguard towers**
 - d. **Video Presentations for visitors (incoming flights and hotel cable channels)**
 - e. **Print materials (brochures, in-flight magazines, etc.)**
 - f. **Information given out by those in the industry, i.e., tour guides, drivers, hotel employees etc.**
3. **Beach Rating System**

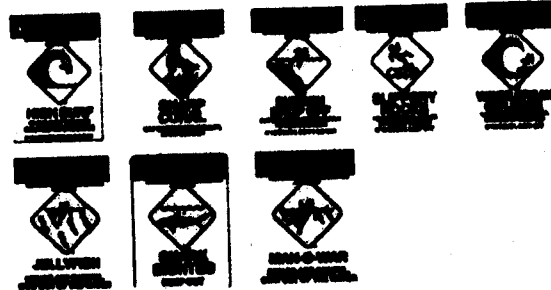
Recommendations

- 1) **Post signage describing natural conditions**
- 2) **Develop and Implement Education Strategies**
- 3) **On Site Prevention and Intervention Strategies**
- 4) **Beach Rating System**

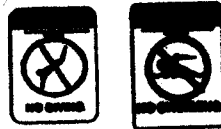
Recommendation #1 - SIGNAGE



Required by Act 190



Other natural conditions
(designs already approved)



Prohibited Activities

ACT 190

HRS Chapter 663



"The State or county operating a public beach park shall have a duty to warn the public specifically of dangerous shorebreak or strong current in the ocean adjacent to a public beach park if these conditions are extremely dangerous, typical for the specific beach, and if they pose a risk of serious injury or death".

Appendix 2

Additional signs will be posted to warn of “other extremely dangerous natural conditions in the ocean adjacent to a public beach park,” as conditions warrant.

FOR EXAMPLE:

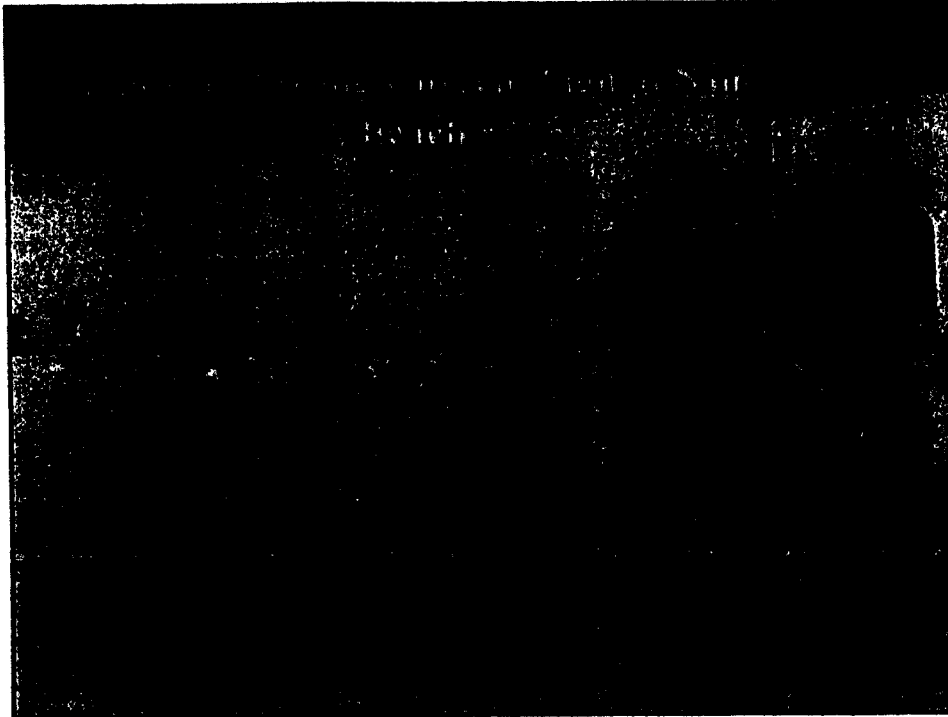


A Shark Sighted Sign may be posted when a shark is visually confirmed by ocean safety personnel, or other reliable source.



Waves on Ledge sign will be posted when this condition exists, i.e., Hanauma Bay





Recommendation #2 Education Strategies

- 1) Educational Events @ Sandy Beach – Think First and Ocean Safety Spinal Injury Awareness Day @ Sandy Beach June 22nd, 2002**
- 2) Assembly presentations at schools island wide to educate students about natural conditions that can be dangerous, the beach signs that warn of such natural conditions, and how they can help prevent themselves and their loved ones from falling victim to injury in the aquatic environment.**

**Recommendation #2
Education Strategies
continued...**

- 3) Ocean Safety Website:**
- Beach Map**
 - Signage**
 - Multilingual**
 - Linked to visitor information/booking sites**
 - Safety Information**

**Recommendation #2
Education Strategies
continued...**

- 4) Public Service Announcements on Television and Radio – Specific to traumatic head and neck injury (filmed at Sandy Beach)**
- 5) Video Presentations for visitors (on incoming flights and cable channels in hotels)**
- 6) Information and Education given to visitors by industry employees, (concierge, tour guides, etc.)**
- 7) Print materials (Brochures, In-flight magazines, etc.)**

**Recommendation #2
Education Strategies
continued...**

- 8. Develop Ocean Safety Curriculum for Health classes in Department of Education that meets National Curriculum Standards – specific to educating students about beach signage and the natural conditions that they represent.**

**Recommendation #3
On Site
Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

- 1) Signage**
- 2) Direct (person to person) contact by lifeguards**
- 3) Public address announcements made by lifeguards via megaphone from lifeguard towers**

Beach Rating System

- Risk and hazard assessment
- Geology, coastal processes
- Ocean processes, including wave characteristics, currents, and tides
- Beach morphology and dynamics
- Beach user profiles
- Activities

Appendix 3

FUNDING NEEDS FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Environmental Hazard Assessment	\$10,000.00
Beach User Profile	5,000.00
Injury Prevention Strategic Planning	5,000.00
Signage	5,000.00
Education and Prevention Activities	
Video Production	10,000.00
Brochures (Printing 100,000 ea)	10,000.00
Information Boards for Lifeguard Towers	10,000.00
Beach Rating System	25,000.00
Evaluation	<u>10,000.00</u>
Total	<u>\$90,000.00</u>

*Cost estimates are based on information currently available from consultants and potential contractors.